



**European Union**  
European Structural  
and Investment Funds

**European Structural and Investment Funds**  
**2014 - 2020**

**Growth Programme for England**

## **ESI Funds Growth Programme Board**

### **Progress on EAFRD Growth Programme**

#### **Purpose:**

To provide the Board with an update on the current position on the EAFRD part of the EU Growth Programme.

#### **Recommendations**

The Board is invited to note the information set out in this paper.

#### **Summary:**

The total amount committed from the EAFRD budget now stands at £36.5m, including £9.5m committed from the offers launched in 2015 and agreements signed under the 2017 offers worth £16.5m.

As at 1 March, the RPA had received 921 Expressions of Interest (EOI) under the food processing, business development and tourism infrastructure offers opened in 2017, requesting funding of £172.7m in total. Invitations to submit a Full Application have been issued for funding totalling £121.8m to 630 applicants. From these, 224 projects have submitted applications for funding of £43.3m, with 91 projects so far securing grant offers worth £16.5m. In addition, the first contract for funding under the rural broadband infrastructure offer (for £10.5m) has been approved.

As at 1 March, the total value of claims paid stood at £6.6m, including £4.18m for 38 projects completing all activity, creating 105 FTE jobs.

The RPA has analysed the key emerging findings from previous and current offers. These findings include a correlation between the size of the LEP area budget and the number of applications received.

#### **EAFRD GROWTH PROGRAMME UPDATE**

1. The total amount committed from the EAFRD budget now stands at £36.5m, including £9.5m committed from the offers launched in 2015 and agreements signed under the 2017 offers worth £16.5m. As at 1 March, the total value of claims paid stood at £6.6m, including £4.18m for 38 projects completing all activity, creating 105 FTE jobs. Activity under the offers opened in 2017 is summarised at Annex 1, and overall scheme progress is at Annex 2.

2. The RPA is continuing to support projects which secured funding under the 2015 Growth Programme offers. 36 projects have completed all activity, confirming the creation of 87 FTE jobs from an EAFRD investment of £3.68m. A further 56 projects have contracts totalling £5.83m to support activity with commitments to create 458 jobs. Funds worth £1.7m have been paid to these projects in support of eligible activity.
3. Under the 2017 offers, as at 1 March, the RPA had received 921 Expressions of Interest (EOI), requesting funding of £172.7m, under the food processing, business development and tourism infrastructure offers. Invitations to submit a Full Application have been issued to 630 applicants for funding totalling £121.8m. Applications for funding of £43.3m have been received from 224 projects, with 91 so far securing grant offers worth £16.5m.
4. The £30m offer to support the provision of rural broadband infrastructure, opened in October 2017, has received 7 applications from Local Authorities for funding totalling £39.3m. The RPA has issued one contract, for £10.5m to support the provision of superfast broadband in The Marches and Gloucestershire LEP areas, and is assessing the others prior to submission to the National Approval Panel. As the budget for this offer is already oversubscribed, we are currently considering whether and, if so, how sufficient funding might be made available to meet the anticipated demand.
5. The RPA has analysed the data available on performance for 12 months to 31 January 2018 to understand how the funding allocated to each LEP area is being utilised. Key findings include:
  - Overall, 27 of the 36 LEP areas had contracted spend under the Growth Programme.
  - Of these, 22 made commitments under both rounds of offers. 5 LEP areas contracted spend through the 2015 offers only.
  - In addition, 9 LEP areas made no commitments under either round of offers, although EOIs have been received for each LEP.
  - The LEP areas who have yet to contract spend include those with the lowest EAFRD budget allocation. Overall, these LEP areas have a combined budget allocation of £18m, with EOI requests totalling £14.5m. A number of these EOIs had translated into full applications for funding worth £1.5m.
  - The 9 LEP areas with the highest budget allocations are also those which have received the most EOIs and full applications to the currently open offers. These LEP areas, with a combined budget of £77m, had contracted spend totalling £18m. In addition, the RPA had received EOIs worth £50m and full applications requesting £40m from these LEP areas.
6. The current open offers will close for applications at 31 May 2018, and all contracts for funding are expected to be issued by 29 March 2019. A number of LEPs are hosting workshops to promote the Growth Programme in collaboration with the RPA, using some funding from the National Rural Network. Activity in this area has proved important in encouraging applications to the Growth Programme.

Tony Williamson, 5 March 2018

## ANNEX 1

### EAFRD GROWTH PROGRAMME UPDATE:

#### 2017 Offers:

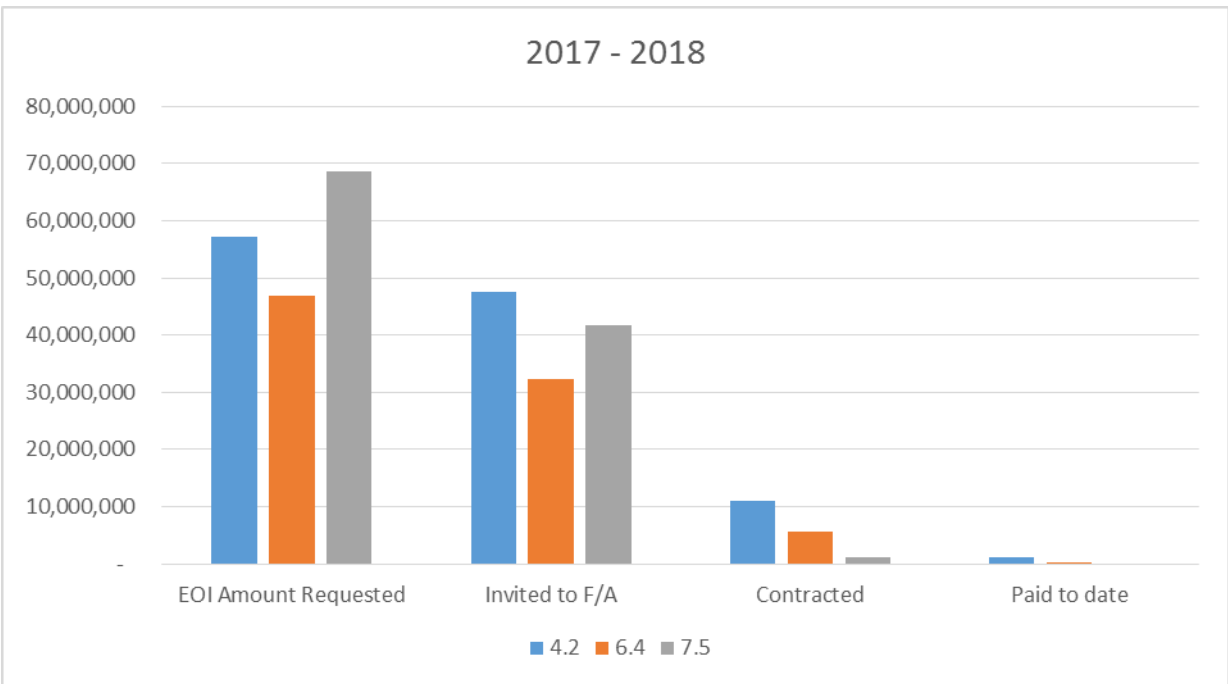
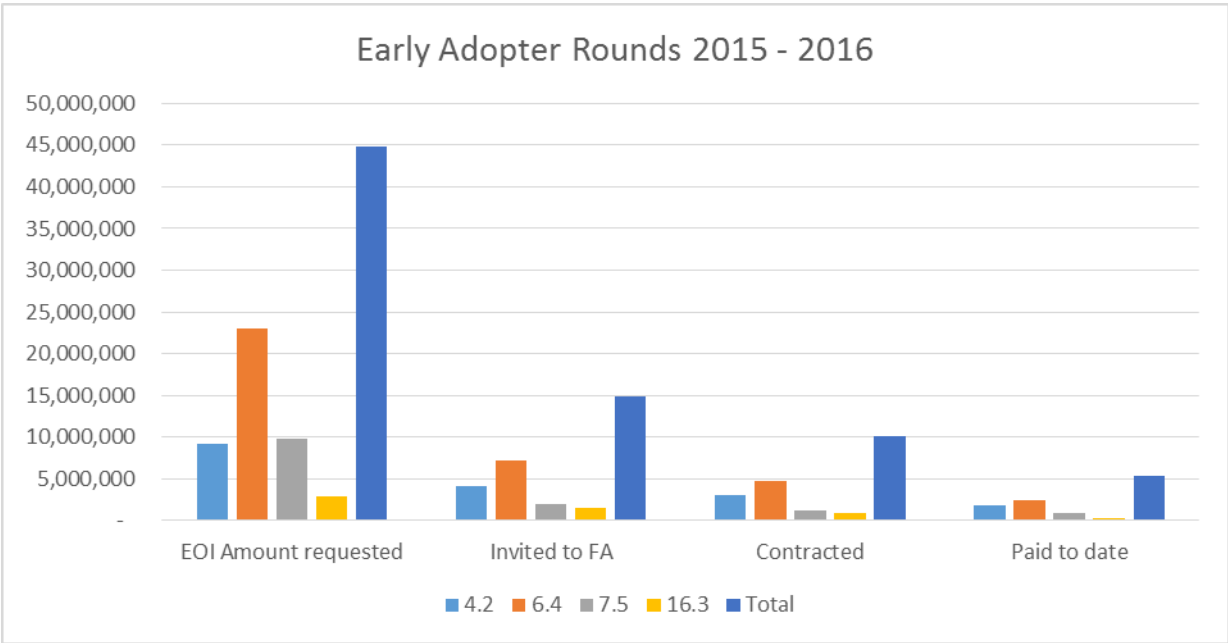
	RDPE Growth Programme	Food Processing	Business Development	Tourism Infrastructure	Rural Broadband
No. EOIs Received	921	191	398	332	-
Value of Grant Sought (£)	172.7	57.2	46.9	68.6	-
Number invited to Full Application	630	146	271	213	-
Full Applications received	224	67	106	51	7
Value of Grant Sought (£m)	43.3	22.5	11.5	9.3	39.3
Number Contracted	91	34	52	5	1
Value of contract (£m)	16.5	10.5	5.4	0.6	10.5

#### Project outputs to date by theme:

	RDPE Growth Programme	Food Processing	Business Development	Tourism Infrastructure
Amount Paid (£m)	6.6	2.8	2.6	1.2
FTE Jobs Forecast	1181	666	359	156
FTE Jobs created	105	59	32	14

ANNEX 2

EAFRD GROWTH PROGRAMME UPDATE – OVERALL PROGRESS



Measure 4.2 = Food Processing  
Measure 6.4 = Business Development  
Measure 7.5 = Tourism Infrastructure  
Measure 16.3 = Tourism Cooperation